

St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School

Preston Old Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 5EP

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. In recent years it has not been good enough to enable pupils to achieve consistently well between Year 1 and Year 6.
- Work and activities provided for pupils are sometimes too easy and at other times too difficult for them.
- Teachers do not always revisit topics soon enough that pupils have not fully understood.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to try to work things out for themselves.
- There are times when teaching assistants are not deployed effectively throughout the lesson.
- Pupils are not always given the time to correct and edit their work.
- The staff team is not fully engaged in working well together to secure school improvement.
- The system for collecting pupils' progress information does not easily identify the progress made by specific groups in school.
- The ability of the governing body to challenge the performance of the school is limited by overgenerous and sometimes untimely information regarding pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. As a result, the school is not improving fast enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception class get off to a flying start because of consistently good teaching.
- There is some good teaching in the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behave well.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the above average rate of attendance.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The curriculum includes a range of additional activities, which add variety and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 parts of lessons as well as sessions taken by teaching assistants. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, parents, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff. A telephone conversation took place between an inspector and the teacher in charge of The Heights Free School, a local school that works in partnership with St Paul's.
- The inspectors took account of 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered 13 staff questionnaires.
- A range of documents were considered, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. The inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maria McGarry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Paul's is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- There is currently an acting headteacher and a seconded deputy headteacher in post because the substantive headteacher is on maternity leave.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress, especially between Year 1 and Year 6, so that it is consistently good by making sure that:
 - work is specifically planned and matched to the needs of all pupils and is refreshed when necessary so that pupils make as much progress as possible
 - pupils have more opportunities to work on their own without relying too much on adult support
 - pupils are always given time to respond to teachers' written guidance in their marking to correct and edit their work
 - all teaching assistants are effectively deployed throughout the lesson.
- Improving the leadership and management of the school by:
 - strengthening the impact of the staff team and raising their awareness of their joint responsibility to securing improvements to the school's work
 - developing more precise systems for checking on the progress of all groups of pupils so that information is readily available and can be analysed and quickly acted upon to accelerate progress when necessary
 - making sure governors rigorously hold school leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and standards.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Nationally published data, unconfirmed results of the 2013 national tests for Year 6 pupils and the school's pupils' assessment data indicates that progress made by pupils is inconsistent between Year 1 and Year 6. As a result, achievement requires improvement. Progress is particularly poor in Year 4, however, the school has put measures in place to tackle this.
- Most pupils make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. Nationally published data shows that too few pupils make more progress than this.
- Most recent test results show that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results across the last three years have varied for the Year 2 groups and are declining for the Year 6 groups.
- Most children start the Reception class with the skills and knowledge typically expected for their age. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are ready for Year 1 having reached levels above those expected nationally.
- The way in which younger pupils are taught to match letters to the sounds they make have improved this year. Older pupils are taught to read in small groups. The school actively encourages pupils to read regularly. Those Year 6 pupils who read to the inspector did so fluently, one pupil saying, 'Reading gives you a different world to go to whenever you want.'
- The school provides effective support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils attain at a level that is similar to other pupils in school and this confirms good progress for these pupils relative to their starting points.
- More-able pupils are also sometimes taught in small groups to accelerate their learning. Year 6 pupils who left school this year made good progress in reading and mathematics. There was no data made available for writing at the time of the inspection. However, work seen in pupils' books indicates good progress in writing.
- In Year 6 in 2013, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made good progress in writing, however, their progress in mathematics and reading was similar to other pupils, in that it required improvement. They attained at approximately two terms behind other Year 6 pupils in reading and mathematics and two terms ahead in writing. This shows that the gaps between those pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and others are closing in writing and mathematics. The school is fully committed to ensuring every pupil has an equal opportunity and recognises that any gaps in pupils' achievement must be eradicated.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although there is some good teaching, the quality of teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has not resulted in sustained good progress for pupils between Year 1 and Year 6.
- Teachers do not always plan activities that accurately match the ability of all pupils in their class. For example, pupils spend a lot of time practising basic skills in mathematics; some pupils do not need so much consolidation and could at times be challenged at a higher level. There are other times when work in pupils' books demonstrates that they have not quite grasped the learning. However, teachers move on to the next topic as planned and do not revisit the topic quickly enough, leaving gaps in learning for some pupils.
- Marking sometimes provides a good level of guidance to pupils. However, teachers' comments are not consistently followed up because pupils are not always given time to correct and edit their work. This can result in pupils repeating the same error.
- Teaching assistants provide a good level of support to individuals and pupils working in small groups. However, their talents are not so effectively used when teachers are introducing lessons.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Reception class and children are extremely keen to get involved in the range of exciting activities provided for them. Children are

encouraged to think carefully and find things out for themselves. For example, children playing in the sand wanted to make sand hills. However, they recognised that they did not have enough sand to do this. They decided to use a digger to transport sand from another area so that they could continue with what they wanted to do. Pupils in some other lessons rely too much on adults which can sometimes slow progress.

- Good lessons progress at a vigorous pace. Teachers question pupils carefully to assess their level of understanding and encourage pupils to discuss their ideas and reflect on how they can improve their work. For example, in one class pupils formulated a list of questions regarding how Dick Turpin might feel. They then got together in small groups to share their thoughts. This helped pupils to come up with a range of improved questions. They were then able to put these insightful questions to the highway man, who was of course visiting the class.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are respectful and polite. Behaviour was good during the inspection and school records show that this is typical. Staff manage behaviour well and disruptions to lessons are rare. However, some pupils can become a little distracted when they are not sufficiently challenged during the lesson.
- Pupils feel safe in and around the school. They have a good understanding of the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils are certain that there is very little bullying and if there were it would be effectively dealt with by adults who care for them.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were positive about how behaviour is managed at St Paul's and the majority feel that their children are well cared for at the school.
- There are a range of opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and contribute to the school community. The head boy and head girl lead the prefects who have various duties around the school. Year 6 'gardeners', support and mentor the 'seeds' who are children new to the school in Reception class. The older pupils feel that these duties help them to become 'more mature'.
- The school councillors are pleased that they are able to organise fund-raising events to buy equipment for school and donate to charity. Pupils were mesmerised when a large number of balloons were set free as part of the Macmillan charity coffee morning event.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in sport to help them stay healthy and promote their well-being. In 2013-14 the primary school sport funding is to be allocated to working in partnership with the local secondary school and a local gymnast to improve the skills of the school's staff so that they can teach sporting activities to a higher standard.
- Punctuality is excellent and helped by the lively breakfast club, which is highly valued by the pupils and exceedingly well attended. Attendance is above average, which reflects the pupils' positive attitudes toward school. Pupils say that they 'like the school the way it is' and really enjoy the range of educational visits linked to what they are learning in class.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher and seconded deputy headteacher have a clear view of the direction that they want the school to take and they have the support of most staff. However, there are some members of the staff team who do not fulfil their shared responsibilities effectively enough with regard to supporting school improvement. As a result, the school is not yet improving quickly enough.
- The school's views about how well it is doing are not fully accurate. In checking its performance the school has been over-optimistic. The school judges itself to be good, while inspectors found that it requires improvement.
- Staff are supported by a programme of ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants. Systems for regular checks of learning and teaching are in place. Inconsistencies have been

identified and adjustments made to improve teaching. However, all teaching is not yet good enough to make sure that pupils achieve consistently well.

- Pupils' progress data does not permit information about specific groups of pupils to be easily analysed. Consequently, it is difficult for leaders to assess pupils' progress and to intervene quickly when necessary.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and pupils enjoy the range of visits and additional activities that are provided. However, it requires improvement because it does not develop literacy and numeracy skills well enough to make sure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- The school has had a light touch support from the local authority.
- School leaders work effectively in partnership with a local school to meet the needs of pupils whose current circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive of, and committed to, the school. For example, they attend assemblies and visit classes as often as they can. The governing body make sure that teachers' salary progression is linked to pupils' progress. They also make sure that the budget is well managed and that the pupil premium funding, is used to benefit the very small number of pupils who are eligible. Governors take part in any training that will help them carry out their duties. However, they are less well informed about the quality of teaching and the progress that all groups of pupils are making because they rely too heavily on reports from senior staff. They are now aware that they have not held school leaders sufficiently to account for the academic performance of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Unique reference number | 119649 |
| Local authority | Blackburn with Darwen |
| Inspection number | 426264 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 201 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Joe Hickey |
| Headteacher | Catherine Monaghan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 September 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01254 201495 |
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